



THE CASE OF CASGEM – LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENTATION

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Groundwater Caucus
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Program Overview

- ▣ Senate Bill (SB) x7 6 enacted in California Water Code Sections 10750 et seq.
- ▣ California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Program (CASGEM)
- ▣ Program Components
 - Statewide program to collect groundwater elevations
 - Collaboration between local monitoring entities and DWR
 - Makes groundwater elevation data readily and widely available to public
 - Requires DWR to prioritize groundwater basins, investigate groundwater basins, and submit reports to Governor and Legislature
- ▣ <http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem>





Background: Accomplishments

- ▣ **Mandated Deadlines**
 - January 1, 2011 - Agencies required to notify DWR**
 - January 1, 2012 – Groundwater elevation monitoring**
- ▣ **Outreach and work with local agencies**
- ▣ **Developed and implemented online system**
- ▣ **Designating Monitoring Entities**
- ▣ **Alternate Monitoring (AB 1152)**
- ▣ **Report to the Legislature and Governor**
- ▣ **Uploading groundwater elevation data**





Background: Current Program Status

(as of August 14, 2012)

- 129 Designations for 100 Basins and Subbasins
- 58 Designated Monitoring Entities
- 3040 Number of CASGEM wells statewide
- 178 Basins and Subbasins with Notifications still in process





The Legislative Process

Program sounds simple but actual implementation is complicated



Intent of legislation vs. “letter of the law”
that can be implemented statewide





Implementation Challenges for CASGEM

- ▣ Unfunded mandate
- ▣ Schedule
- ▣ DWR Bulletin 118 groundwater basins
- ▣ Varied expectations
- ▣ Integrating WDL and CASGEM online systems
- ▣ Reliant on local agencies
- ▣ Availability and limitations of data
- ▣ Participation
- ▣ Conflict between CASGEM requirements and well confidentiality in Water Code





Lessons Learned

- ▣ Tight schedule and unfunded legislative mandate resulted in less flexibility
- ▣ Difficulties were encountered
- ▣ Positive outcomes
- ▣ CASGEM usefulness will increase with time
- ▣ Implementation is an ongoing process
- ▣ Funding controls the scope of the program
- ▣ Step in the right direction





Group Discussion Questions

- How do we communicate to policy makers the ramifications of poorly-written or overly prescriptive laws?
- How can legislation be written to be effective and allow flexibility for the variability of factors related to groundwater in California?
- Should all groundwater basins be treated the same and require long-term and seasonal groundwater elevation monitoring? Is this reasonable? Is this feasible? Is this a good use of resources?
- How do we educate the diverse parties dealing with groundwater issues so legislation improves groundwater management rather than create onerous regulations?





Group Discussion Questions

- How can we get away from the struggle between confidentiality of wells and groundwater information and making well and groundwater data more readily available including to the public in order to better manage the limited groundwater resources?
- What can be done to help areas of counties struggling to comply with CASGEM, but have limited financial resources and no other eligible local agencies in the area of the groundwater basin?

